IN THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A distributed computer system for the establishment of a marketplace for branded promotional values issued by at least two businesses and being awarded to at least two consumers, said distributed computer system comprising:

a persistent storage node arranged for storing data related to said promotional values, said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers;

an application server node for managing data stored by said persistent storage node, for executing transaction processing regarding said data, and for interfacing with said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers;

said distributed computer system being adapted for communicating with said at least two businesses and for communicating with mobile communication devices associated with said at least two consumers;

said distributed computer system being arranged to allow transactions involving said promotional values between said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers, thereby providing said marketplace between said at least two businesses, and between said at least two consumers, respectively.

2. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said persistent storage node is constituted by a database server which comprises the following databases:

a mobile device database storing identification information and data related to mobile communication devices associated with said at least two consumers;

a business database storing data related to said at least two businesses; and

a transaction database storing data related to said transactions involving said promotional values.

3. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said database server further comprises a promotions database storing data related to promotions performed by said businesses.

4. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said application server node provides a set of core services according to which coordination and processing of said transactions, and interfacing with said persistent storage node are carried out.

5. (currently amended) A distributed computer system as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 and being arranged in order to manage said promotional values in terms of non-zero amounts of branded M-points, where an M-point is invariably associated with the issueing business, and attributed by a point value freely determined by the corresponding issuing business.

6. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 5, and being arranged for core services involving at least one of the following transactions:

an ownership transaction in which an amount of M-Points is transferred (1) from the corresponding issuing business to one individual consumer's mobile communication device; or (2) from one individual consumer's mobile communication device to a second and distinct individual consumer's mobile communication device; or (3) from an individual consumer's mobile communication device back to the original issuing business,

a redemption transaction in which a consumer redeems an amount of M-points, and

a trade transaction in which two ownership transactions are carried out concurrently.

7. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 6, wherein said ownership transaction is constituted by either

a marcom transaction, during which a marketing communication message is transmitted to said mobile communication device, or

a withdraw transaction, during which an amount of M-points is returned to the corresponding said issuing business.

8. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 7, wherein said marcom transaction is constituted by either

a transfer transaction during which one or more M-points are transferred from an account of a first consumer to an account of a further consumer, or

an award transaction during which one or more M-points are awarded by a business to a mobile communication device being associated with a consumer.

9. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 6, wherein said trade transaction is constituted by either

a morph transaction during which a consumer is allowed to convert a non-zero amount of M-points relating to one business into a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a second and distinct business, and whereby the conversion ratio between the two amounts is determined automatically by said application server node depending on data from said businesses, or

an exchange transaction during which a first consumer transfers a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a first business to a second and distinct consumer, said second consumer returning to said first consumer a non-zero amount of M-points

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relating to a second and distinct business, whereby both amounts are freely determined by respective relinquishing consumer.

10. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 5, and being arranged in order to handle promotions undertaken by businesses, and whereby each business can freely determine the start and stop time of its said promotions.

11. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 5, and being arranged for managing different types of said M-points for each involved said businesses, in the form of a single brand point which is directly associated with the issuing business, and attributed by a value multiplier freely determined by the corresponding issuing business.

12. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 5, further being arranged for managing said M-points in the form of a one or more of promotional points each of which, in addition to being associated with the issuing business, is also associated to a specific promotion undertaken by the issuing business, and attributed by a distinct value multiplier freely determined by the corresponding issuing business.

13. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 5, and being arranged for managing each of said M-points in a manner which relates only to each individual mobile communication device, and not to a physical person owning said mobile communication device.

14. (original) A distributed computer system as claimed in claim 5, wherein said system is arranged to manage said amounts of M-points with at least one account related to each mobile

communication device and to each kind of point, and at least one account related to each business and each kind of point.

15. (currently amended) A distributed computer system as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, comprising a web server adapted for communicating with said mobile communication devices, which in turn are constituted by Internet-enabled mobile devices such as cellular mobile telephones, personal digital assistants, personal computers, telematics equipped automobiles and other so-called "smart vehicles," or yet other ~~funciontally~~ functionally equivalent devices.

16. (original) A method for the establishment of a marketplace of branded promotional values issued by at least two businesses and being awarded to at least two consumers, said method comprising:

storing data related to said promotional values, said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers in a persistent storage node;

managing said stored data and interfacing with said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers, by means of an application server node;

transmitting information related to said promotional values, said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers by communicating with said at least two businesses and with mobile communication devices being associated with said at least two consumers; and

allowing transactions involving said promotional values between said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers by means of said distributed computer system, thereby providing said marketplace between said at least two businesses, and between said at least two consumers, respectively.

17. (original) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein said step of storing data comprises at least one of the following:

storing data related to said mobile communication devices; storing data related to promotions performed by said businesses; and

storing data related to transactions involving said promotional values.

18. (original) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein said promotional values are managed in the form of a non-zero amount of M-points, each of which corresponding to a predetermined point value determined by the corresponding issuing business.

19. (original) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said method comprises carrying out at least one of the following transactions:

allowing a transfer of ownership in which a non-zero amount of M-Points is transferred (1) from the corresponding issuing business to one individual consumer's mobile communication device; or (2) from one individual consumer's mobile communication device to a second and distinct individual consumer's mobile communication device; or (3) from an individual consumer's mobile communication device back to the original issuing business, or

allowing redeeming of one or more M-points which are associated with a consumer's mobile communication device.

20. (original) A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said method comprises a morph transaction during which a consumer is allowed to convert a non-zero amount of M-points

relating to one business into a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a second and distinct business, and whereby the conversion ratio between the two amounts is determined automatically by said application server node depending on data from said businesses.

21. (original) A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said transactions comprise:

transmitting a marketing communication message to a mobile communication device being associated with a transaction, or

returning said one or more M-points to said business.

22. (original) A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said transactions comprise:

converting a non-zero amount of M-points, which are associated with a consumer's mobile communication device and relating to a first business, into a non-zero amount (not necessarily equal to the first amount) of M-points relating to a second and distinct business, or

exchanging a non-zero amounts of M-points in a manner so that a first consumer transfers a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a first business to a second and distinct consumer, said second consumer returning to said first consumer a non-zero amount (not necessarily equal to the first amount) of M-points relating to a second and distinct business, whereby both amounts are freely determined by respective relinquishing consumer.

23. (original) A method as claimed in claim 19, wherein said transfer of ownership of M-points comprises:

transferring one or more M-points from a first consumer's mobile communication device to a second and distinct consumer's mobile communication device, or

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awarding one or more M-points by a business to a consumer's mobile communication device.

24. (original) A method as claimed in claim 17, and comprising managing different types of M-points for each involved said businesses in the form of a single brand point which is directly associated with the issuing business, and attributed by a value multiplier freely determined by the corresponding issuing business.

25. (original) A method as claimed in claim 17, and comprising managing said M-points in the form of a one or more of promotional points each of which, in addition to being associated with the brand of the issuing business, is also associated to a specific promotion undertaken by the issuing business, and attributed by a value multiplier freely determined by the corresponding issuing business.

26. (original) A method as claimed in claim 17, and comprising managing each M-point in a manner which relates only to each individual mobile communication device, and whereby no private information regarding a physical person is stored.

27. (original) A method as claimed in claim 16, comprising managing said amounts of M-points with at least one account related to each mobile communication device, and at least one account related to each business.

28. (currently amended) A method as claimed in ~~any one of claims 16-27~~ claim 16, comprising communicating via the Internet with said mobile communication devices, which are constituted by Internet-enabled mobile devices such as cellular mobile telephones, personal digital assistants, personal computers,

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telematics equipped automobiles and other so-called "smart vehicles," or yet other funciontally equivalent devices.

29. (original) A method for facilitating and improving marketing and promotional activities through the establishment of a marketplace of branded promotional values issued by at least two businesses and being awarded to at least two consumers, said method comprising:

storing data related to said promotional values, said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers;

managing stored data and transmitting data related to said promotional values to and from mobile communication devices being associated with said consumers; and

allowing transactions involving said promotional values between said at least two businesses and said at least two consumers, thereby providing said marketplace between said at least two businesses, and between said at least two consumers, respectively.

30. (original) A method as claimed in claim 29, wherein said promotional values are managed in terms of non-zero amounts of branded M-points, where an M-point is invariably associated with the issueing business, and attributed by a point value freely determined by the corresponding issuing business.

31. (original) A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein a particular M-point is constituted by a brand point which is directly associated with the issuing business.

32. (original) A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein a particular M-point is constituted by one or more of promotional points each of which, in addition to being associated with the

issuing business, is also associated to a specific promotion undertaken by the issuing business.

33. (original) A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein said M-points are awarded to a mobile communication device associated with a consumer either by said business or by another consumer.

34. (original) A method as claimed in claim 33, wherein the awarding of said M-points to said mobile communication device comprises transmission of a marketing communication message for presentation to said consumer via said mobile communication device.

35. (original) A method as claimed in claim 34, wherein said transmission of a marketing communication message is invariably actuated as a result of said consumer participating in at least one predetermined point-earning opportunity and any thereof ensuing M-point transaction.

36. (original) A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein each consumer's interest level in promotional offerings from each one of said at least two businesses can be inferred and determined indirectly by their M-point transaction activity.

37. (original) A method as claimed in claim 36, wherein different marketing communication messages are transmitted to different mobile communication devices depending consumer's said inferred interest level.

38. (original) A method as claimed in claim 32, and being arranged in order to handle promotions undertaken by businesses,

and whereby each business can freely determine the start and stop time of its said promotions.

39. (original) A method as claimed in claim 38, wherein said promotion is associated with a start point of time and a stop point of time, which together define the time period during which the promotional points associated with said promotion can be subject to any kind of M-point transactions.

40. (original) A method as claimed in claim 39, wherein said promotional point can be redeemed between said start point of time and said stop point of time, but cannot be redeemed after the expiration of said stop point of time; however after the expiration of the promotional period said promotional point can yet be subject to any kind of M-point transaction except a redemption transaction.

41. (original) A method as claimed in claim 40, wherein expired promotional M-points can be reinstantiated by the issuing business by re-allowing redemption transactions thereof.

42. (original) A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein said M-point is given a value, determined by a point value attribute and a value multiplier attribute, both of which are freely determined by the issuing business.

43. (original) A method as claimed in claim 30, wherein the handling of said M-points comprises at least one of the following transactions:

an ownership transaction in which an amount of M-Points is transferred (1) from the corresponding issuing business to one individual consumer's mobile communication device; or (2) from one individual consumer's mobile

communication device to a second and distinct individual consumer's mobile communication device; or (3) from an individual consumer's mobile communication device back to the original issuing business.,

a redemption transaction in which a consumer redeems an amount of M-points, and

a trade transaction in which two ownership transactions are carried out concurrently.

44. (original) A method as claimed in claim 43, wherein said trade transaction is either

a morph transaction during which a consumer is allowed to convert a non-zero amount of M-points relating to one business into a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a second and distinct business, and whereby the conversion ratio between the two amounts is determined automatically depending on data from said businesses, or

an exchange transaction during which a first consumer transfers a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a first business to a second and distinct consumer, said second consumer returning to said first consumer a non-zero amount of M-points relating to a second and distinct business, whereby both amounts are freely determined by respective relinquishing consumer.

45. (original) A method as claimed in claim 44, wherein said morph transaction allows co-/cross-marketing between different businesses, said transaction being mediated by a service provider without any direct relationship between said businesses.

46. (original) A method as claimed in claim 45, wherein all compensations and charges between said businesses are handled

retroactively as a percent reduction or increase on the ordinary redemption commission due to the service provider.

47. (currently amended) A method as claimed ~~in any one of claims 30-46~~ claim 30, wherein said M-points can be allowed to be redeemed by said consumer in exchange for said promotional values.